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ARITHMETIC IN HIGH SCHOOLS.*

By David Eugene Smith.

Professor Smith said that it was not his purpose to advance a thesis upon the subject, but rather to speak of the pros and cons of the question. He called attention to the difficulty of deciding such a question for all types of high schools. In particular, it is evident that schools which are almost exclusively preparatory institutions for colleges have not the time to devote to such a subject. On the other hand, commercial, or technical high schools must of necessity introduce certain work of this kind. Professor Smith was of the opinion that such work should not be of the older type for the reason that subjects like taxes and insurance have, as usually presented, almost no mathematical content. He felt that if arithmetic was introduced in any type of high school, it should be chiefly for the purpose of improving the student's power in pure calculation. In particular, he felt that logarithms, the slide rule, approximations, limits of error, and kindred subjects should have place along with the work in short methods of calculation. He called attention to certain courses in arithmetic given in the schools of Sweden, Switzerland, and Germany, as outlined, together with those of other countries, in Dr. E. H. Taylor's recent monograph. He expressed his opinion that the coming of the junior high school would give us a more modern course of study in mathematics, and that it was probable that arithmetic could be carried along at the same time as other subjects to better advantage than by placing it in a class by itself in the senior year.

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* From a discussion on this subject at a meeting of the New York Section.